

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

BY GEORGE HOUSTON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

No. 26.

NEW-YORK, JULY 18, 1829.

Vol. 5.

CORRESPONDENCE.

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

Concluded.

I have hitherto laid before the reader a brief account and character of the evidence on which Christianity actually rests. Let us now consider a summary of the rules of evidence and testimony adopted in our courts of justice.

Hearsay is no evidence: for we have no means of interrogating the informant, or of judging of his opportunities of information, his qualifications, or his character. Of course, the hearsay of an hearsay of an hearsay, is absolutely worthless.

Witnesses, therefore, who have no personal knowledge of the transaction are inadmissible. Why are not the immediate witnesses to the fact itself produced?

Even if hearsay were admissible, we ought to know minutely every thing relating to the informant, that we may judge of the value of his account. A narrator, therefore, who does not tell his authority for every dubious fact, is of no account.

If the best evidence be not adduced, we ought to be informed why it is not.

If hearsay evidence of a recent fact be inadmissible, evidence of a fact that happened a century ago, now offered for the first time, is not worth a moment's attention.

Witnesses interested in the event of a contested cause, are inadmissible; for they have a bias on their minds to speak as their interest tempts them.

Hence witnesses who are hired or paid by one party, are incompetent.

So are witnesses who gain their living by supporting a particular interest, or one side of a disputed question.

So are witnesses who belong to a particular party, and are liable to be warped by the esprit de corps: particularly in a religious question.

Witnesses incompetent to judge of a fact from want of education and knowledge, are not admissible. The tricks of a juggler would be miracles to a country boor, who had never seen such before.

Witnesses guilty of habitual falsehood are inadmissible: especially if they deem falsehood allowable in the particular case.

Witnesses who contradict each other, are mutually destructive of each others testimony, if their values be equal.

If a witness depose to a fact, not noticed by persons present at the time, of equal veracity, and who must have noticed it had it happened, he is not to be believed if the negative testimony be strong and unimpeachable.

In proportion as any fact is antecedently important, or improbable, the stronger, the clearer, the more unimpeachable is the evidence of it required to be. Common evidence for a common fact; stronger in proportion as the fact is uncommon.

There are such innumerable instances recorded of pretended miracles, proved by testimony apparently veracious, that all evidence adduced for the purpose of proving a miracle, is *a priori* incredible: for the uniform course of human experience, in all civilized countries, and among all men of learning, is in opposition to the competency or the veracity of such evidence.

Therefore, if such evidence of a miracle be liable to any of the objections above stated, it is inadmissible for the purpose for which it is adduced.

Let us very briefly run over the Christian facts, bearing in mind, and carrying with us the foregoing principles of deciding on human testimony, which no man, conversant with the investigations of disputed facts, will for a moment controvert.

The evidence of the doings and sayings of Jesus Christ, are to be found in the four gospels. If these be deficient in authenticity, we have absolutely no evidence whatever: for Christians by common consent have rejected every other. I ask, then,

1. Who are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? They are supposed to be the authors of these gospels, but they do not say so themselves, and no one says so for them till 150 years after the supposed death of Christ.

2. Luke expressly says he was a compiler. Mark is supposed to have written what he heard from Peter. Of Matthew we know nothing. Of John less. But be they who they may be, none of them claim the authorship: none of them declare who wrote the accounts—none of them declare they were present at the transactions—none of them vouch for the facts as true on their own personal knowledge. So far as appears, all is hearsay, traditional evidence of facts and sayings which, to be accurately related, could not be told from memory, but must have been written down quickly.

3. Not knowing any how but by conjecture the writers of these gospels, and being absolutely ignorant when and where they were written, we have no means of judging how far they are worthy of credit.

4. The best evidence is not produced. Why did not Christ publish his own doctrines if they were so important to the world: and not leave them to the frail memory of any transient narrator—of nobody knows who? Why did not these evangelists declare who they were, and how they came to write the accounts we possess, and on what evidence they offer to the public these narrations? It is not likely that unlearned and ignorant men should thus turn authors in a language to which they were unaccustomed—in a language not understood by, or in use among the people they addressed—if they did, why do they not say so expressly; why not tell us how it happened that, being Syriac Jews, they came to learn Greek; why not remove these reasonable doubts?

So, of the main fact, the *resurrection*, the promise and the boast was made in public—the execution of Jesus Christ as a malefactor was public—the challenge to a resurrection was given in public—The performance, according to every evidence we possess of it, was secret, clandestine, concealed from those for whose conviction it was promised—and Jesus Christ, if he ever lived, or died, or rose (all equally doubtful) sneaked about after his resurrection like a thief from the officers of justice—known only among the male and female bigots of his own party, and departing finally from among a few witnesses whose names and characters, with the chief circumstances that must have attended his departure, are left untold, or told without particulars, or in any manner that will allow us to judge of the truth of the fact. Why did he not put the question to rest by appearing publicly after his resurrection, and by causing the public evidence of it to be preserved?

5. The apostles, the disciples of Christ, followed preaching as a trade, and lived at their ease upon the credulity of the multitude after Christ's death. St. Paul, who was a tent-maker, absolutely boasts of his disinterestedness for having worked a short time at his trade, while he travelled about as a preacher! Even the brothers, the family of Jesus Christ, who deemed him while living an impostor, and who had the best right to judge whether he was so or not, quitted their business, and travelled about with their wives, subsisting on the credulity of the ignorant believers. Are such men competent witnesses, to prove the truth of the lie that supports them?

6. All the apostles, and the populous whom they addressed, were of the lowest and most ignorant class of the community; untaught ignorant men. Acts iv. 13. They were not capable of judging, and do not appear to have taken any pains to investigate; for instance, whether a person pretending to be sick was really so; whether the cure was real or pretended; whether it was effected by casting out a pretended devil, that occupied the patient, or by curing epileptic fits; whether the cure was momentary or permanent, &c.

These apostles, then, are open to every objection to which any incompetent witness can be liable. They were ignorant; they were interested; they formed a religious party; they lived by it as a profession; if any of them wrote our modern gospels, they contradicted each other in several important particulars, especially as to the resurrection. They notice as true, facts impossible, such as the graves opening; the dead arising, and parading through the streets of Jerusalem; they notice as true, phenomena that must have been noticed and recorded by every philosopher and historian of the time, as the earthquake and darkness at the crucifixion, wherein no writer whatever corroborates them; they relate the most improbable occurrences, and the most useless and suspicious miracles upon the slightest hearsay evidence, with no attendant care of investigation so as to remove doubt and suspicion; and as to the very existence of Jesus Christ, it is rendered extremely dubious, by the omission of any mention of him by Philo Judæus, his countryman, and cotemporary; and by Josephus, who was born within a year or two of Christ's asserted crucifixion.

Who has a right to assert the existence of a man, upon the evidence of these evangelists, who were themselves never named until 150 years

after the death of this supposed author of Christianity? That some seditious fanatic may have been put to death under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate is possible; and that he may have had disciples, like Johanna Southcote, or Jemima Wilkinson, is possible also; and that the Gentile followers of this Jew malefactor may have named him *Christos*, anointed, is possible also; but it is next to impossible, that the Jews, who spake Syriac, should have dubbed their religious leader by a *Greek* title. This appellation is manifestly the after thought of some Gentile fanatic.

The time is approaching, gradually indeed but surely, when this outrageous system of fraud and robbery—this imposition upon the understanding of the weak and the ignorant, for the purpose of obtaining their money under false pretences, will be consigned as it deserves to public execration. The friends of mankind, however, must intermit no effort to enlighten the ignorant, and expose under all its aspects this baneful imposture.

The Rev. Mr. Jeremiah Jones, in his "new method," vol 1, page 70, lays down the following among other propositions for ascertaining the genuine or apocryphal character of any book. In which we cordially agree, and request the reader to apply them for himself:—

"That book is apocryphal which contains contradictions: or which contains histories or proposes doctrines contrary to those which are known to be true: or which contains ludicrous, trifling, fabulous, or silly relations; or which contains anachronisms; or wherein the style is clearly different from the known style of the author whose name it bears."

All this is reasonable. But do the evangelists contain no contradictions? No relations in opposition to known facts? No accounts, ludicrous, trifling, silly, or fabulous: is the Devil tempting Christ, none such? Is the miraculous conception, or the miracle at Cana, none such? However, let the reader judge.

I proceed, according to my proposal, *to compare in a general way, the value of religion, particularly of the Christian religion, with the evils that arise from the abuse of it.*

From the very earliest appearance of the Christians and Christianity, the earth has been overrun with bigotry, intolerance, private disputes, public war—with envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness; specially imputable to the quarrels of Christians among themselves. The Christians, from the very outstart of the sect, were universally detested: *odio humani generis convicti*, says Tacitus. The Christian writers, as a class, were the most abandoned liars, forgers, interpolators, mutilators, and destroyers, that the whole history of literature, from the beginning of knowledge to the present day, is able to present to us. There has been nothing like them: nothing so shamelessly abandoned. Of all this I hope I have produced ample proof, from the acknowledgement of Christian divines. Then why did these divines believe in Christianity? Because man is a creature of circumstances. Because they were bred from infancy to manhood among Christians; because every body around them, their mothers, their nurses, their fathers, their teachers, their older and revered friends, their own companions were Christians: they were taught that it would be criminal to doubt the truth of Christianity: infidelity was held out to them as an unpardonable crime: they were brought

up to the profession of Christianity as to a trade by which they were to gain wealth, and consideration, and respect among their countrymen: they were ruined in all respects if they renounced their error, however deeply convinced of it. How much of all this operates among professing Christians at the present day, and even in this country! But certainly with nothing like the force here that it does in Europe. Still, I cannot help feeling deeply the excuses or hypocrisy that arise from this state of things. The prevalence of education and a free press are alone competent to cure the evil. But all education here, is, as yet, an abominable fraud, and a most unjustifiable abuse of the power acquired over the infant mind: we have yet a bigoted public, nor in this most enlightened country upon earth is the press as free as it is in England and Germany.

What does this religion of miracles amount to? Granting that the silly and trifling miracles of the new testament took place, they were miracles only to those who saw them; they are only human testimony to me. Considering the innumerable instances of human testimony bearing witness to miracles that we know to have been frauds, the result of experience is, that every alleged miracle is in a high degree improbable. Certainly it is incredible, if any reasonable objection can be made to the testimony in favor of it. Is there a human creature bold enough to say, after due investigation, that there are not many very strong indeed unanswerable objections to the Christian miracles, external as to their evidence, and internal as to their character? Is there any parson who has effrontery enough to deny that the question has many and serious doubts and difficulties? But if such doubts and difficulties really exist, they are conclusive against the system that involves them. For does the Almighty deal darkly with his creatures? Does he require on pain of punishment full faith in a doctrine beset with difficulties on every hand? What reasonable man can believe this? Such a doctrine, so involved in clouds and thick darkness, may be the result of the imperfect faculties, and very deficient knowledge of fallible men, but it cannot proceed from divine omnipotence and perfection: if God be all wise and all good; if he be pre-eminently the God of truth—doubt, and difficulty, and error, and falsehood, and fraud, and forgery, are not the means of conviction he would condescend to employ; whatever the priest may teach to the contrary. Consider further what kind of a God Christianity presents to us. A being who, if we may believe the old testament, is wrathful, irritable, revengeful, cruel, unforgiving, capricious, proud, tyrannical—a compound of all the worst passions with which the Christian priests have clothed their devil. This is the being we are commanded to love and adore! To such a being we are to offer prayers, and render thanks! For what? Is he to be moved from his purpose by prayers and entreaties like a silly woman? Cannot he bestow what is needful, without beseeching and flattery? Then again, for what are we to thank him? Did we place ourselves here? Did he not place us here for his own good will and pleasure, to serve his own purposes, not ours?

Oh, but he is the great and omnipotent creator, and moral governor of the universe! Is he so? What proof is there of this? I know of none. I know of no creator extraneous to, and different from the universe I behold. How, you say, could the universe create itself? How, say I,

could God create himself? Oh, but he has existed from all eternity! Has he so, so then has the universe: there is at least as much proof of the last assertion as of the first. God, you say, is the moral governor of the universe. Is he so? A very miserable one then he is. Why does he permit so many innocent beings to be destroyed, or reduced to misery by earthquakes, by wars, by pestilence, by famine, and all the multitudinous evils that prey upon mankind?

Either God could put an end to moral and physical evil, and he will not; or he is willing to do it but he cannot; or he is neither able or willing. What then becomes of his attributes—his infinite power and infinite goodness? Here, says a priest, holding up the bible—here is the word of God—here is the book of divine inspiration, containing every truth necessary to eternal salvation. But God has appointed an order of men, to instruct their fellow creatures by explaining, illustrating, and enforcing these divine truths. This order of men is the Christian clergy.

Indeed! so it appears that God Almighty has spoken so unintelligibly, that it requires 12000 clergymen in England, as many in the United States, and 100,000 more throughout Europe, to supply God Almighty's deficiencies, and to explain what he has spoken darkly and unintelligibly! Is it so? Well, begin; explain to us—Oh, no! say the clergy; you must first engage to pay us from 1000 to 4000 dollars a year each! Is it worth while to keep an army of parsons in perpetual pay at this rate, to perpetuate this deception—to preach up falsehood as if it were solemn truth—falsehood that they know to be so—is it for the public good to encourage this system of exacting money under false pretences? Is it or is it not swindling? Adieu,

PHILO VERITAS.

PRAYER.

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy father which is in secret, and the father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—MATTHEW vii. 5, 6.

Mr. Editor—It appears from this portion of scripture, that the Jewish church, in the days of Christ, had arrived at an alarming degree of hypocrisy and corruption; and that the greatest professors, who chose the most conspicuous situations (such as standing in the synagogues and at the corners of the streets) to display their sanctity, were declared by him to be the greatest hypocrites. Their long prayers in public places, gave them credit for sanctity they never felt in their hearts: hence they were compared to whitened walls and painted sepulchres; having a fair exterior, whilst within was nothing but "corruption and dead men's bones." At what time the professors of Christianity began to make "long prayers to be seen of men," is uncertain; but certain it is, that in the present day, our modern Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, would not fall short of their brethren of old, in that particular, provided they were well paid for it.

“When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are.” And what are the hypocrites like? The most common definition of the term hypocrite, is a dissembler in morality or religion. But those hypocrites mentioned in the text, in addition to their dissimulation, were very fond of displaying their sanctity in the most public places. Jesus has elsewhere exposed their hypocrisy, when after a display of a great deal of *outward* holiness, he compares them to ravenous wolves, and devourers of widows’ houses. In short those hypocrites mentioned in the text, were men who professed a great deal of religion, and imposed on the people by their strict observance of rites and ceremonies, while their hearts were absolutely corrupt, and their lives and deportment belied their professions.

How much better are the professors and preachers of the present day, than the hypocrites were in Christ’s day? If the Jewish church needed reformation in those days, does not what is called the Christian church need it as much in our day? The hypocrites of old made long prayers, for what? To be seen of men. The hypocrites of the present day make long prayers, and for what? For money. The former were actuated by vanity; the latter by their love of gain. The former were promised their reward; and will the latter go unrewarded? The Jewish church, instead of being a house of prayer, was called a den of thieves, because they exchanged money and sold doves therein. Our churches of the present day may then be called a den of robbers, because they take your money, and sell the gospel therein. In the former they only exchanged money; in the latter they take it from you altogether! In the former they only *sold doves*; in the latter they *sell salvation* (pretendedly) itself!

“But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door.” Before prayers were composed, like 4th of July orations, committed to memory like opera songs, and delivered from the pulpit like play-actors delivering their parts from the stage; men were in the habit of retiring into their closets, and after shutting the door as the text expresses it, offered their prayers to that secret intelligence, who pervades all space; from whose all-seeing eye no veil can screen our actions, and whose ear is open to every secret breathing of the soul.—What absurdity then to cry aloud, like the prophets of Baal, as if he were deaf, or on a journey; to rant and foam at the mouth as if he regarded our frenzy; or make a flowery and graceful speech, as if he could be edified by human wisdom. And since God is a searcher of the heart, and desires not that we should approach him with our lips only, whilst our hearts are far from him, secret prayer appears to be most agreeable to his will, as coming immediately from the heart, and the only form expressly enjoined upon us in the text. The contrary course was practised by the hypocrites, and Jesus forbids his followers to be like unto them. Under this view of the subject, the question naturally presents itself to the mind. Are public prayers intended most to please God or the people? Would it not be absurd to suppose, that a prayer composed in the study of the preacher, altered and amended, and interlarded with flights of fancy, to suit the fashions of the times, afterwards committed to memory and delivered from the pulpit, was intended to please God

more than the people? If, when the preacher having ascended the pulpit, and with clasped hands and upturned eyes, you hear him praying to God to influence him with the spirit of prayer, and put words in his mouth; you would at the same time search his pocket, and find every word he intended to say, written down, what would be your conclusion? That he was playing a solemn farce, and mocking God, when he asked him to put the words in his mouth, which he had already committed from his written prayer, and knew every word he intended to say.

"Pray to thy father which is in secret." Is God then really a secret being? If you enter one of our churches, and hear a modern Pharisee addressing the almighty author of the universe, you would really not suppose him to be a secret and incomprehensible being; you would imagine the speaker to be as well acquainted with him as Laban was with the household gods stolen away by his daughter, or Nebuchadnezzar, with the image he himself had set up. Instead of asking forgiveness for making an article of merchandize of his gospel, and bartering and selling it for filthy lucre, he insolently asks him to bless this iniquity. Instead of asking forgiveness for taking his holy name into his polluted lips, he directs him what to do; and instead of asking pardon for the many impositions practised upon the people, he prays the lord to prepare the hearts of the people for a new fraud. If this is no making "long prayers to be seen of men," it is not "shutting the door" and praying to a secret intelligence to dispose of things according to his good will and pleasure.

We see a new order of things substituted in the room of the secret devotions mentioned in the text. The preacher attends what is called divine service, to display his talents in making "long prayers to be seen of men," and to earn money; and the people attend to hear a flowery discourse, and take out their pennyworth in seeing the new fashions.

"And thy father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." It is evident that those who "love to pray standing in the synagogues," "that they may be seen of men," do not expect the reward from their "father which seeth in secret," for no sooner is the *amen* pronounced to the long winded prayer, than three or four emissaries are on foot, collecting their reward in *money* here, not willing to trust their "father which seeth in secret" to reward them hereafter.

INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1829.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Owing to peculiar circumstances, we have not been able to complete the arrangements necessary for bringing out the *Correspondent* as early as we intended, in its *enlarged* form. This will cause a delay, probably of a few weeks, in the appearance of the *first* number of the *new series*. Those who have hitherto patronized us, and wish to continue their support under the new arrangement, are, in the meanwhile, respectfully requested to signify their intention by letter, or by leaving their names at our office, or with our carrier or collector. Although attempts have for sometime been made, and are now making to paralyze our efforts, we can assure the advocates of truth, that we never will desert our post,

unless compelled to do so by sickness, or by the means being withheld which are essential to the support of our establishment. Hitherto we have calculated on *principles*, not on *men*, and it is only by adhering to this course that we expect the countenance of the liberal minded.

NEW ARRANGEMENT.

In compliance with the wishes of a considerable number of our subscribers, we have concluded on introducing into the *Correspondent* a greater variety of topics than usually occupy its pages.

Hitherto, we have confined ourselves chiefly to *theological* discussions; and in the *five* volumes of our work now before the public, will, probably, be found nearly all the argument, pro a con, that can be advanced on this subject. To confine ourselves, therefore, to this course, would only be to repeat, perhaps in a new dress or form, what we or our correspondents have already advanced; whereas, by resorting to the fields of natural philosophy, literature, and the common occurrences of life, much novel matter might be gleaned materially conducive to the advancement of truth. Not that we intend in any way to abandon liberal principles, or to relax in our efforts to overthrow superstition. Convinced as we are by continued experience, that a belief in supernaturals is the true source of all the misery which afflicts the human family, its entire subversion shall always be our principal aim. The introduction of other topics, will be auxiliary to this important end; and by this combination of instruction and rational amusement, we hope to be able to render our journal more extensively useful and interesting.

To effect the object contemplated, our paper will be *enlarged* so as to embrace about one third more matter than it contains at present; and as this will considerably increase the expense of publication, the subscription will be necessarily raised from \$3 to \$4 per annum. Subscribers who have already settled for the current year, and who may wish to continue under the proposed arrangement, will thus have fifty cents to pay, to entitle them to receive vol. I of the new series.

The losses we have sustained by defaulters, renders it imperative that no departure in future should take place from our original conditions. Those, therefore, who may have neglected at the close of the present volume (which is now completed) to pay up their arrears, will be considered as having discontinued the paper.

A few *complete* sets of the *Correspondent*, making *five* handsome volumes, 8vo. may still be had at the original subscription price, \$1.50 a volume. The following are also for sale at the office of the Correspondent.

Liberal Tracts, from No. 1 to 8, inclusive, \$1 for 1000 pages.

Ecce Homo! or, a Critical Enquiry into the history of Jesus of Nazareth; 12mo. bds. 75 cents; bound and gilt, \$1.

Volney's Ruins of Empires; with the Law of Nature; a new translation, with plates, large edition bound and gilt, \$1.25.

The God of the Jews and Christians; embellished with a correct likeness, 25 cents.

View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in Favor of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism, 25 cents.

The Elements of Modern Materialism. By Charles Knowlton, M. D. 8vo. bound, \$ 1.50.

In the press, and shortly will be published, an essay on *the Right of Free Discussion*, from the pen of one of the ablest philosophical writers in this country. It will extend to about 50 pages, 12mo. and be sold at 25 cents.

Those taking quantities of the above publications will be allowed a liberal discount.

. Persons residing between Utica and Buffalo, will be supplied with *Tracts*, and all the above publications, by Mr. Joseph Savage, Syracuse, on the same terms as at our office. Orders, with remittances, from other quarters, will be punctually executed at No. 76 Maiden-lane, New-York.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Objections to the resurrection of Christ.—1st. Because no one has yet proved the gospels to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem ; or that such a person as Jesus ever lived or died there.

2d. Because no one has yet proved that Jesus Christ was dead when taken from the cross.

3d. Because no one has yet proved that his body was not stolen from the sepulchre. The utmost has been tried to make us believe that he could not have got out without supernatural aid, because the chief priests had planted a watch and sealed the stone. But mind, they never thought of doing this till the day after he was entombed. Now this was like locking the stable door after the horse was stolen. They also talk much about the largeness of the stone, but we are told that Joseph himself placed it at the sepulchre.

4th. Because no one knows how Matthew knew that an angel appeared and rolled away the stone, and that the guards were so terribly frightened as he represents, he not being present.

5th. Because, if the guards had really seen what Matthew states, it is very unlikely that they would have perjured themselves so soon after.

6th. Because no one saw Jesus rise from the tomb.

7th. Because Matthew says, that at the crucifixion the graves opened, the vail of the temple was rent, that there was darkness over the land for three hours, and that, at the resurrection (and not till then) several dead bodies of saints arose and walked into the city! And also relates many other things equally preposterous.

8th. Because it is said that Christ said, as Jonas was three nights and three days in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three nights and three days in the heart of the earth. Now, we are told that Jesus was crucified on Friday and that he rose again on Sunday morning. Reconcile this if you can.

9th. Because it is said that Christ said, that his disciples were to sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Now Judas Iscariot was a suicide.

10th. Because it is said that Christ said, that some of his disciples should not taste death till he came, and said several other things respecting his coming which have all proved false.

11th. Because the bible, excepting the scraps of morality interspersed in it, contains little else but bad laws, horrid murders, bloody wars, improbable tales, and obscene love songs.

12th. Besides the above objections, I shall now add another to show that the story of Christ's ascension is also not proved.

Because Mathew and John, who, it is said, witnessed Christ's pretended miracles, say not a word about it. Mark and Luke (said to have been pupils of Paul) indeed mention it; but of what use is their testimony, when it is universally acknowledged that they were not eye witnesses of what they relate?

To conclude, there is no one who says expressly, and for himself, that he saw either the resurrection or the ascension, and yet the priests assert that if we believe not these fairy tales we shall be damned. But this is the very threat that must expose the weakness of the entire fraud. It was persecution and prosecution that founded the Christian religion, and it is persecution and prosecution, aided by the wealth, power, and influence of interested parties, that now uphold it. Let any of these things be withdrawn, and the whole delusion will vanish like mist before the rising sun.

Laws of existence.—A thorough examination into nature, though it may not completely elucidate the origin of existence, will give the death-blow to all theology and superhuman existences. It cannot be too often reiterated that knowledge is progressive, and that it is accelerated in proportion as it is separated from any superstitious nations. Had mankind always implicitly obeyed the mandate of the priest, science would ever have remained dormant in religious communities; for religion has ever been the greatest foe to knowledge, which is beneficial to man: Galileo would never have discovered the figure and motion of the earth; and this is not a solitary instance of the fear which the clergy have evinced and still do evince at the spread of knowledge. Societies (exclaims the emphatic Palmer) will never be happy until they understand the general laws of existence. They have been quarrelling for ages past about its origin: an awful theology has obtruded itself upon the sacred ground of philosophy and has usurped the right of judging upon subjects, concerning which prejudice had rendered it totally blind, and the most stupid ignorance had produced a total and absolute incompetence. The first great characteristic feature of existence is, its eternal duration, both antecedently and subsequently considered; it is ignorance, folly, and fanaticism alone that possess the temerity of opposing an idea so irrefutable.

Motion of the earth.—Besides the diurnal motion of the earth on its

OWN axis, which is somewhat more than a thousand miles every hour, its annual motion in its orbit is supposed to be about six hundred millions of miles; consequently its daily motion is about one million six hundred thousand miles, its hourly motion sixty-six thousand miles, its motion every minute no less than eleven hundred miles, and its motion every instant or second of time one hundred and eighty three miles!

Stimulants.—All strong stimulants weaken the digestive powers, by urging them on too quickly; they are combustibles put into the stomach to blow up the constitution; their use is a sort of suicide; they are spurs and whips to the constitution, which wear it out in the end.

The interest of the priest is not that man act virtuously; but that he do not *think* it is necessary, say they, that the son of man know little and believe a great deal.

Every thing in us, even to self love, is acquisition; we learn to love ourselves, to be humane or inhuman, virtuous or vicious. The moral man is all education.

Free Press Association.—The lectures on *theological* and *philosophical* subjects, are resumed, at the Bowery Long Room, opposite the theatre. On Sunday evening, the 19th of July, at 8 o'clock, Mr. Offen will deliver a lecture on an interesting theological subject.

AGENTS FOR THE CORRESPONDENT.

<i>Philadelphia, Pa.</i> John Turner, No. 140 1-2 Market-st.	<i>Hamilton, O.</i> Robert Hewes.
<i>Paterson, N. J.</i> Robert Chiswell.	<i>Kendal, O.</i> Matthew Macey.
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The *CORRESPONDENT* is published every Saturday, at No. 76 Maiden-lane, New-York; and by Mr. John Turner, No. 140 1-2 Market-street, Philadelphia, at THREE DOLLARS per annum, in advance. All communications to be addressed to Mr. Geo. Houston, Editor, New-York.

GEORGE HOUSTON, Printer, No. 76 Maiden-lane, (junction of Liberty-street) New-York. Book and Job Printing of every description.

INDEX.

	Page		Page
Angels,	368	Man, state of,	17
Belief,	95,111	Massacre of St. Bartholomew,	77,
Bible,	112,288	94,109,124,142	
Blasphemy,	59	Morality of religion,	61,398
—, prosecutions for,	221,238	Moral courage,	161
Christianity and Mahomedanism,	394	Ohio, prospects in,	12
—, influence of,	83	Opinion, constitutional rights of,	202,
—, evidences of,	209	219,234	
225,242,305,321,337,353,370,385,401		Oratorios,	272
Characteristics,	30	Paine's birth day, celebrations of,	42,
Christ, objections to the resurrection of,	410	56,71,86,91,101,122	
Chrystamancy, secrets of,	13,28	Patriarchal virtues,	96
Colonization, Robert Owen on,	5	Plays, religious,	62
Controversy, religious,	383	Post office regulation,	104
Craft,	157	Prayers,	128
Demurrer, the,	391	Prayer,	406
Death-bed repentance of liberals,	194,213	Priestly arrogance,	300
Desultory thoughts,	276	Priest and doctor, correspondence be-	
Devil, the,	399	tween,	1,
Deity,	152,279,358	20,35,98,116,136,148,162,179,197,246,	
Discussion between Owen and Camp-		261,289,326,329	
bell,	265,284	Providence, special,	113
Easter day,	205	Puritanism,	207
— customs,	206	Quakers,	165
Earth, motion of the,	411	Queries for the reflecting,	351
Experiences,	34	Reason, catechism of,	158
Existence, laws of,	411	Religious publications,	346
Free Press Association, lectures deli-		— freedom, Jefferson on,	366
vered at the,	9	Religion, low state of,	107
104,120,153,167,184,263,280,293,329,361		—, remonstrance of Maddison	
Free inquiry,	32,145,316	respecting,	171
Funeral oration of the Parsis,	159	Revivals, genuine,	118
Garment that came from heaven,	257,274	Souls and spirits,	398
Hebrews, epistle to the,	81	Stewart's essay on man, examination	
Holy days,	223	of,	49,66
Hot cross buns,	207	St Philip Neri,	255
Human species, varieties of,	102	St. Benedict,	191
Jewish nation, notices of,	129	St. Bede,	207
Jewish and Christian traditions,	99	St. Catharine,	254
Image, the bleeding,	269	St. Michael,	189
Intolerance,	187	St. Giles,	159
—, dialogue on,	270,	Spiritual existencies,	232,
286,318,334,350,364		259,292,324,360,374	
Itinerant shepherds,	31	Sunday mail,	23,45,233
Knowledge, lectures on,	36,51,67,86	—, observance of,	177
Liberal opinions, advancement of,	22,	Table, a long,	160
93,140,200,218,240,378		Temperance societies,	216
Liberals, Baltimore Association of,	252	Vhemic court,	156
Loretto, house of,	156	Virgin, image of,	93
Materialism, modern,	287	Voltaire, sketch of,	379,396